

REMARKS

Claims 1-62 were originally presented in the above-identified application with claims 39-62 having been withdrawn by the Examiner based on a restriction requirement previously entered. Subsequently, claims 1-38 have been examined.

Claims 1-38 have each been rejected by the Examiner:

Under 35 USC § 102(b) claim 1 as being anticipated by Bard (USP 6,717,681), and claim 20 as being anticipated by Pouet (USP 5,481,356); and

Under 35 USC § 103(a) claims 1-38 as being obvious from Rosakis (USP 6,031,611) in view of Bard.

In response to these rejections, claims 1, 7, 12, 14, 20, 26, 31 and 33 have been amended to better describe the present invention.

Of claims 1-38, claims 1 and 20 are independent method and systems claims, respectively. Each of claims 1 and 20 have been amended to additionally recite that:

at least one of the front and back surfaces of a flat, panel, substrate or wafer is illuminated to produce a reflected beam that carries distortions of an illuminated area on the at least one surface; and

that interference patterns are processed to obtain information on surface slopes of at least one portion of the front surface, the at least one portion being or corresponding to the illuminated area.

Thus independent claims 1 and 20 have been amended to clarify that the surface slopes obtained are of a portion of the front surface of the illuminated flat panel, substrate or wafer when either, or both front and back surfaces are illuminated. These amendments to claims 1 and 20 are support in several locations in the specification as filed, e.g., paragraphs [0002] to [0007].

Dependent claims 7, 12, 14, 26, 31 and 33 have also been amended to clarify what is stated in each and to better correspond to the corresponding one of claims 1 and 20 as amended.

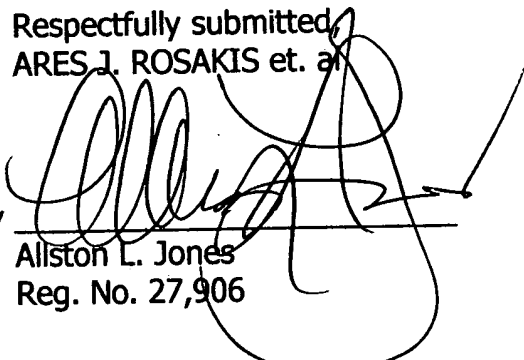
From a reading of each of the cited references, whether considering them individually, or in any combination of two or more of them, no showing or suggestion of the features as now claimed could be found or reached.

It is respectfully submitted that claims 1-38 are each now in condition for allowance. It is therefore respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowability be issued by the Examiner.

Favorable action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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by


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